

Discovery RE and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development (and British Values)

RE provides children with an important opportunity for SMSC development. To help schools ensure children are accessing this vital part of their curriculum, Discovery RE maps SMSC opportunities throughout the scheme of the work.

Below is a breakdown of the Ofsted requirements for SMSC (taken from the Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, published January 2015), with just a few examples of how Discovery RE helps schools provide these learning opportunities for children.



Spiritual Development

The Ofsted Handbook says: 'Children are given opportunity to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and form their own perspective on different faiths, feelings and values...They are encouraged to show enjoyment and fascination towards themselves and the world around them and reflect on this with imagination and creativity'.

Spiritual Development	
Ofsted Criteria	How does Discovery RE help fulfil this?
Be willing to reflect on their own beliefs and form perspectives on different faiths, feelings and values.	Each enquiry begins with the child's experience (step 1) and then returns to it (step 4), encouraging students to reflect on their views in light of what they have learned.
Engage with the world with 'enjoyment and fascination'	In Year One, pupils are asked 'Does God want Christians to look after the world?' Children are encouraged to consider aspects of the natural world in an exploration of Christian beliefs about Creation.
Imagination and creativity	Year Four pupils are asked to consider 'What is the most important part of the Nativity Story for Christians today?' They explore the key question 'Can the arts help to communicate religious beliefs?' and are encouraged to create their own responses.

Moral development

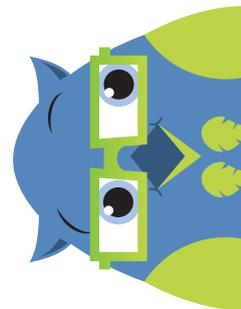
The Ofsted Handbook says; 'Children are given opportunity to explore the difference between right and wrong and the consequences of their actions... They should learn to respect civil and criminal law and are encouraged to understand and appreciate the moral and ethical viewpoints of others'.

Moral Development	
Ofsted Criteria	How does Discovery RE help fulfil this?
Know the difference between right and wrong.	The Year Four enquiry asks 'How important is it for Jewish people to do what God has asked them to do?' Children explore whether they think religious people lead better lives and think through what a 'better' life might look like.
Know the consequences of behaviour and actions.	In Year Two the enquiry 'Why did God give Jesus to the world?' leads children to explore environmental issues and the reasons why Christians believe humanity needs a 'Saviour'.
Show interest in moral and ethical viewpoints and appreciate those of others.	Year 6 explore the question 'What is the best way for a Muslim to show commitment to God?' They find out about Zakah and the work of Islamic Relief.

Social development

The Ofsted Handbook says; 'Children are encouraged to work alongside people from other backgrounds. ...They should participate in social setting and communities including volunteering, cooperating and resolving conflicts effectively.

British values, democracy, rule of law, mutual respect, liberty and tolerance are promoted, with children being encouraged to make a positive contribution to modern Britain.



Social Development	
Ofsted Criteria	How does Discovery RE help fulfil this?
Work and socialise with people from other backgrounds.	Discovery RE encourages active learning and gives many opportunities for group work across every year group as well as facilitating learning about religion and social issues.
Cooperate and resolve conflicts effectively	Across Year Six, children consider how faith and beliefs motivate and impact on behaviour and if religious belief influences people to behave well towards others.
Engage with British Values	The idea that not all people of faith are the same is explored throughout Discovery RE, emphasising individual liberty and the consequences of personal choice.

Cultural development

The Ofsted Handbook says; Students are encouraged to develop an interest in exploring different faiths and cultural diversity...They should show understanding towards others in their local, global and national communities.

Children should have a knowledge of the parliamentary system of core British values and history and are given opportunity to participate and respond to artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities.

Cultural Development	
Ofsted Criteria	How does Discovery RE help fulfil this?
Appreciate a range of cultures within school and community	In Spring 2, Foundation children ask 'How do people celebrate?' Children are encouraged to find similarities and differences between their culture and those of others.
Have a knowledge of British values and the Parliamentary system.	In Year Five, classes discuss the carrying of the kirpan (ceremonial dagger) and conflicts between religious and Government law.
Explore different faiths and show tolerance towards them in a local, global and national setting.	Discovery RE includes enquiries across the principal world faiths. Enquiries include an Investigation into Persian New Year, pilgrimage to the River Ganges, the significance of the Hajj and the importance of The Golden Temple.



The SMSC development of a child is a whole-school if not community-wide responsibility. RE is not the place where pupils 'do' SMSC. However, children taught using Discovery RE certainly have rich opportunities for development, resulting in students who understand their own beliefs and have a strong respect and appreciation for the beliefs of others.

It is also a strong contributor to the British Values agenda (see www.discoveryschemeofwork.com)

Article written by Julia Watson, RE specialist, teacher and Discovery RE Consultant.

